Janay Green

Ms. Krafft

AML 2410 Section 8974

October 17, 2013

Response Paper 3

Throughout the book Beloved, Toni Morrison illustrates how reliving the past is difficult for some people to do. During this time frame former slaves were constantly reminded of the traumatic and horrific lives they once lived. In this book, Sethe and Paul D are forced to look back in their past lives in order to try and move on in their present and future lives. Struggling from the acts of trying to forget the past, Sethe puts up a shield to protect her only living child, Denver that still lives with her, away from the community; While Paul D. travels from one spot to the next to try and forget the past.

During slavery African Americans faced horrific lives from the way they were punished to how they were treated overall. Slaves were treated like property without hardly any say so in their lives. Slaves could not roam the land freely, get married legally to the person of his or her own choice, sometimes, and so on. For example, Sethe stated “I found out there wasn’t going to be no ceremony, no preacher. Nothing. I thought there would be something— something to say it was right and true” (Morrison 70). During this quote, Sethe was telling Beloved and Denver about her crystal ball earrings she received from Mrs. Garner as a wedding gift, and how the earrings represented as a symbol of marriage for her and Halle. Also, Sethe continues by telling Beloved and Denver how she stole different types of fabric to make her a wedding dress.

Another example of Sethe, reliving the past is when Beloved asks her “your woman she never fix up your hair” (Morrison 72). At this point Sethe was force to try and remember her past, in which she was rarely able to see her because of her mother’s line of work. Sethe then continues by telling Beloved and Denver that sometimes throughout the night her mother would come in the room and show Sethe her mark, which was a circle and cross on her rib, that way Sethe could tell her apart from the other women. This mark help Sethe identified her mother after she was hung, with other women. By reminiscing about her mother Sethe could see the horrific aftermath scenes of her mother being hung then thrown on the ground like she was nothing, which bothered her. “She had to do something with her hands because she was remembering something she had forgotten she knew. Something privately shameful that had seeped into a slit in her mind right behind the slap on her face and the circled cross” (Morrison 73). Within this quote, one can why Sethe rarely brought up her past life. The flashback and memories brought up a horrible time in her life.

In conclusion, some people like to forget the past, so they want have to relive it and face the truth. But in order to move in the future one has to be willing to relive it in order to move on with one’s life entirely.